



News Release

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Girl Scout Helps Utahns Thrive with Diabetes

Expo volunteer shares ways to prevent, control diabetes in tough economy

(Salt Lake City, UT) – A visit with her mother to the American Diabetes Association’s (ADA) Diabetes Expo two years ago prompted Genevieve Ellis to earn her Girl Scout Bronze Award. She used what she learned at the Expo to tell others about the disease that kills hundreds of Utahns every year. On February 28, Genevieve and her mother Joyce will join diabetes experts to continue the fight at the 9th Annual Diabetes Expo in Sandy..

When Joyce Ellis was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in May 2006, she wasn’t too surprised because her family had a history of the disease. “The scary part had been watching my mother’s health deteriorate in part because of her diabetes,” Joyce said.

More than 124,000 Utahns have diabetes and another 45,000 have the disease but don’t know it yet. Data from the Utah Department of Health Diabetes Prevention and Control Program show that some 500 Utahns die from diabetes every year. It is also the leading cause of leg and foot amputations, adult blindness, and end-stage kidney disease. Having diabetes can as much as quadruple your risk of heart attack or stroke.

“When I found out my mom had diabetes, I knew it was something big and bad,” said Genevieve. But when her grandmother died from the disease, she said, “It really hit me. I needed to do something fast or diabetes would take someone else from me.”

It was at the 2006 Expo that Genevieve and her mother learned how to manage Joyce’s diabetes. Since then she has had little trouble with the disease. Most of the

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complications from diabetes can be delayed and even prevented with proper treatment and self-management.

The Diabetes Expo is the largest diabetes event in the state. Every year thousands of Utahns visit the free, one-day expo to get tips on how to eat better, be more active, monitor their blood glucose, take care of their feet and eyes and much more.

The event features free screenings sponsored by St. Mark's Hospital, educational seminars on day-to-day healthy eating and active lifestyles, cooking samples, information in English and Spanish, and a Youth Zone.

“My mom and I have volunteered for more than a year now,” said Genevieve, “and I don’t see us stopping anytime soon. All the people who work at the ADA are so supportive,” she added.

More than 50 exhibitors are scheduled to participate in the Diabetes EXPO from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, February 28, 2009 at the South Towne Expo Center in Sandy. Admission is FREE. For more information or to join the list of exhibitors, call 1-888-DIABETES. Visit <http://www.diabetes.org/saltlakecityexpo> for early registration and a detailed schedule.

Contact Beverly Bartel (bbartel@diabetes.org or 801-750-0645) to schedule an interview with Genevieve and Joyce at expo.

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The mission of the American Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.